

# ARTICLES

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VISITATION and ENQUIRY

Concerning Matters Ecclesiasticall,  
According to the Laws and Canons of the  
Church of *ENGLAND*.

*EXHIBITED*

To the Ministers, Church-Wardens, and Side-  
men of every Parish within the *Diocese* of

## Worcester,

By the Right Reverend Father in God,

## R O B E R T

Lord Bishop of *WORCESTER*.

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*L O N D O N*, Printed by *T. Ratcliffe*. 1664.

Bibliography



THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

'In Paradise the Tree  
Of Knowledge was the pride ;  
By God's supreme decree,  
The man who eat, then died.

But Heaven in mercy since  
Does him who tastes forgive ;  
To know is no offence :  
Now, he who eats, shall live.'

HENRY STEVENS of Vermont, FSA, &c  
4 Trafalgar Square, London.  
1882



*Worcester, Diocese of. - Visitacion Articles*



*The Tenor of the Oath to be tender-  
ed to the Church-Wardens and  
Side-men of every Parish in the  
Diocese of Worcester.*

**Y**ou shall Swear diligently to en-  
quire, and true presentment make  
of all defaults and offences as are inqui-  
rable by the Laws Ecclesiastical of this  
Land, *So God you help.*





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## TITUL. I.

*Concerning Churches or Chappels, with the  
Ornaments and Furniture belonging to  
them.*

I. **I**S your Church, Fabrick (or Chappel) with all things appertaining to it, kept in good repair within and without, with such cleanliness, decency and order, as becometh the House dedicated to the Publick Worship and solemn service of God?

II. HATH any part of them, or any thing belonging to them, been sold or embezzled: when? and by whom?

III. IS there in your Church or Chappel an handsome Font of Stone, standing in a convenient place, with a good Cover to it, for the Administration of Baptisme? Is there also a decent Communion Table, with a fair Carpet of Silks or fine Cloath, also a fine Linnen Covering to

to be used at the holy Administration of the Lords Supper? What Cup, Chalice, Patin, or Flagons have you belonging to that Service?

IV. HAVE you in your Church (or Chappel) a convenient Pew for your Minister to read Divine Service in? Also a Pulpit, with a decent Cloth and Cushion? Have you a large folio Bible of the best Translation, with two Books of Common Prayer well bound, one for the Minister, the other for the Clerk? Have you the Book of Homilies set forth by Authority; also the Book of Canons, and a Table of allowed degrees in Marriage?

V. HAVE you a Register-Book of Parchment for all that are Christened, Married, and Buried in your Parish, in which are set down the names of the Parties, with the Day, Month and Year of each Christning, Marriage and Burial? Is the Transcript of these every year within one Month after March 25. brought in to the Bishops Registry?

VI. HAVE you a Paper-Book, in which the names of Strangers that Preach or Officiate in your Church or Chappel are set down; and another Book for your Church-wardens accounts?

VII. HAVE you a fair Surplice and other Ornaments, according to his Degree, for your Minister to use in his publick Administrations, only for outward Decency, Order, and Distinction?

VIII. HAVE you a strong Chest, with Locks and Keys, wherein the Plate & other Vessels, with the Books and Vestments belonging to the Church, may be safely and decently kept? Have you a Bier with a black Verse-cloth for the decent interment of the Dead?

## T I T. II.

*Concerning the Church-yard, Houses, Glebes, Tithes, or Rents belonging to the Church.*

I. IS your Church yard sufficiently fenced with Walls, Rails, or Pales, and decently kept from all annoyance



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ance and encroachment? Are the Trees therein preserved?

II. IS the Mansion-house of your Minister, with all other Houses thereto belonging, kept in good repair? Have any of them been pulled down or defaced? Hath any encroched upon the Land thereto belonging, or felled the Trees thereon growing?

III. HAVE you a perfect Terrier of all Glebe-lands, Gardens, Orchards, and Tenements belonging to your Parsonage or Vicaridge? Also a particular List of such Pensions, Tithes, Rents, Customs, and other yearly Profits within or without your Parish, as belong thereto? Are any of them withheld from your Minister? and by whom?

IV. HAVE any of the ancient Glebe-lands belonging to your Parsonage or Vicarage been taken away, or alienated by Lease, Sale, or Exchange, without License from the Ordinary, and the free consent of the Incumbent? Have any Inclosures been made in your Parish to the detriment of the Church?

## TIT. III.

### Concerning Ministers.

I. IS your Minister Episcopally Ordained (Deacon or Priest) according to the Laws of the Realm of England, and the ancient practice of the Church Universal, no less than of this National Church?

II. IS he defamed or suspected to have obtained his Orders or Benefice by any Simoniackal compact?

III. HATH he been legally Instituted and Inducted into his Benefice? Did he within two Moneths after his Induction publicly read in the Church, upon some Lords-day or other Holy-day, in the time of Divine Service, the 39. Articles of Religion established in the Church of England? Did he then and there publicly declare his assent thereunto?

IV. HATH your Minister been Licensed to officiate by the Bishop of this Diocese, or either of the two Universities?

Doth



Doth he being thus Licensed diligently read Divine Service, and preach every Lords-day in your Church or Chappel, unless hindered by Sickness or reasonable absence? and in such cases doth he procure some lawfull Minister to read Prayers, to Preach, and perform other Ministerial Duties?

V. DOTH your Minister Preach sound Doctrine only, both for Faith and Manners, tending to the Conspiring of People in the knowledge of God and their Saviour Jesus Christ, according to the holy rules of the Scripture, and the obedience of the Gospel; Do you know that he hath at any time within one years space last past preached any false, Heretical, Seditious, Scandalous or Schismatical Doctrine, thereby to seduce People to Error or Faction, to the danger of their Souls, and the disturbance of the peace of this Church and Kingdom?

VI. DOTH your Minister in his Prayer before Sermon devoutly & discreetly commend to the grace of God the Church Catholick here on Earth, particularly these British Reformed Churches; also the Kings most Excellent Majesty, according to his Just and Royal Titles; together with all Estates Ecclesiastical and Civil? Doth he praise God for the Faithfull, who have overcome this World, and are at rest from their Labours? Doth he alwayes conclude with the Lords Prayer? Doth he in his Prayer or Sermon affect any odde or Fanatick expressions, or excessive length?

VII. DOTH your Minister in the Morning and Evening Service, and in the Administration of the Holy Sacrament, and in performing of other publick Religious Offices appointed by the Church of England, use the respective Forms in the Book of Common-Prayer, together with those Rites and Ceremonies which are enjoyned in this Church, and declared to be not any necessary parts of Divine Worship, but only things of Decency, Order, and Edification, tending to the Peace and Uniformity of the Church?

VIII. DOTH your Minister diligently examine in the Church Catechisme the Youth of your Parish every Lords-day in the afternoon? Doth he also instruct others that are ignorant in the Fundamental points of Christian Religion? Doth he prepare, and, as occasion is offered,

red, present the Youth so instructed to the Bishop, to be confirmed by laying on of his hands, with Prayer and Benediction, in that Faith they profess, according to the Primitive practise of the Church of Christ. Doth he endeavour to reclaim all Popish Recusants, and other Heretics in your Parish, to the true Religion established in the Church of England?

IX. IS your Minister, whether Parson, Vicar, or Curate, conformable to his Doctrine and Life to the holy Rule and great Example of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is he a man of a studious, sober, peaceable, unblameable and exemplary life, for Piety, Sanctity, Charity and Industry in his Calling? Is he Grave, Modest, and Regular in his outward Demeanor, for Hair and Clothes, according to the Constitutions and Customs of the Church of England? Is his Company, Carriage and Conversation in Word and Deed such as becometh a Minister of the Gospel, who remembers the great Account he must give for his own and other mens Souls committed to his Charge?

X. IS he ready to visit the Sick, and to perform those Offices to them which are required in the Church of England? also to baptise any Infant in danger of death, when he is desired so to do? Is any Infant or other by his default yet un-baptised in your Parish? Doth he refuse to give the Sacrament to any in your Parish, and for what Cause? or doth he give it to such as are scandalous notorious sinners, or such as are excommunicate, or refuse to be reconciled to their Neighbours?

XI. DOTH your Minister Marry any Persons in private Houses, or such as are under Age; not having the Consent of their Parents or Guardians? Doth he Marry any without Bannes first published three Sundayes or Holy-dayes in the Church? Doth he marry at other Houres than between eight and twelve in the Forenoone, without having any License so to do?

XII. HATH your Minister taken upon him to appoint any publick or private Fasts, Prophecings, or Religious exercises, without lawfull Authority? Doth he in those that are duly appointed use the Forms prescribed by Authority? Doth he, or any other Minister or Lay-

son, hold any Conventicle or Religious meetings in private Houses within your Parish, for people of several Families to resort unto, contrary to the Laws and Canons in that Case provided?

XIII. IS your Minister constantly Resident among you? and how many weeks in a year hath he been absent from his Benefice? Hath he any Curate to assist him in his absence or presence? Is that Curate in Holy Orders according to the Church of England? Hath he a License from his Bishop to serve the Cure? And doth he carry himself also as an able and discret Minister, and conformable to the Church of England? What yearly stipend hath he?

XIV. IS there in your Parish, besides the Parson, or Vicar and Curate, any that preacheth only as a Lecturer? Is he in Holy Orders, and conformable to the Church of England, and Licensed by the Bishop of this Diocese? Doth he read Divine Service before his Lecture, and in all things demean himself as is most for the Peace of the Church of England, and of your Parish?

XV. DOTH your Minister give you notice of and duly observe Holy-daves, Festivals, or Fasts, with other solemn times, as Ember and Rogation Weeks, according as is by the Laws and Canons of this Church appointed?

## TIT. IV.

### Concerning Parishioners.

I. IS there any in your Parish that are reputed Hereticks or Schismaticks, refusing Communion with the Church of England, or professing any other Religion than what is Established in this Church, seducing others from it, and railing against it? Are there any convicted Papists, known Anabaptists, Familists, Quakers, and other Separatists in your Parish?

II. IS there any person in your Parish that lyeth under any common fame or vehement suspicion of Adultery, Fornication or Incest? Are there any common Drunkards,



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hards, Swearers, or Blasphemers of Gods Name, and his Holy Word: Are any noted for Railers, unclean and filthy Talkers, or sowers of Sedition, or living in discord and contention? Are there any excommunicated by the Censures of the Church, and not yet reconciled?

III. DO any of your Parish prophane the Lords day, neglecting of publick Holy Duties, or by doing the works of their ordinary Callings, or using unlawfull Recreations, or permitting their Children and Servants so to do? Do they duly observe other Holy dayes, Festivals, or Fasts appointed by Authority, for the Advancement of Piety, Charity and Devotion?

IV. DO those that inhabit or sojourn in your Parish duly resort to your Church or Chappel, there to worship God according to the Religion of the Church of England? Do they come thither, and continue there during Divine Service, Sermons, and other Holy Duties, with that reverence, order and decency, befitting humble and devout Christians, as is required by the Lawes, Canons, and laudable Customs of the Church of England?

V. ARE there in your Parish any that refuse to have their Infant-Children Baptized by your Minister? or do they keep them unbaptized longer than this Church alloweth? Are there any Infants or more aged Persons in your Parish not yet Baptized?

VI. DO TH every House-holder in your Parish cause their Children, Apprentices, and Servants to learn the Church-Catechisme, and give account of it to your Minister, as he shall require it in the Church on Sundayes or other Holy dayes, as is appointed? And when they are therein well instructed, do they take care to have them brought by the Minister to Confirmation, when occasion is offered, by the Bishop, for the increase of all Spiritual Gifts and Graces in them?

VII. IS there any person in your Parish, who being sixteen years of age, and well instructed in Religion neglecteth or refuseth to receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Lords Supper at least three times in one year (of which Easter to be one?) Do all receive this Sacred Mystery with that outward Gesture of humility, reverence, and lowly adoration, which becomes them to their God and Saviour, meekly kneeling, accord-

ing to the Order and Custome of the Church of England?

VIII. ARE there any of your Parish who do keep familiar Society with them that are excommunicated, so as to countenance them in their sins, or encourage them in their contumacy?

IX. ARE there any of your Parish who are known or suspected to be unlawfully married, contrary to the Laws of God and this Church? Are there any who having been lawfully divorced do live together again; or who being lawfully married, and not divorced, do yet live asunder?

X. ARE there any married Women in your Parish, who after their safe-delivery from Child-birth refuse to make their humble and publick Thanksgiving to God for so great a mercy, according to the Rites and Appointment of the Church of England?

XI. ARE there any of your Parish who refuse to pay their Easter-Offerings and other Duties to your Minister; or to pay the Rates assessed on them for the repair and provisions of the Church?

XII. DO any among you refuse to bury their Dead according to the Forms & Rites of the Church of England, which are so consonant to the faith, hope, and charity of true Christians, towards those that dye in the peace of the Church? Are there any Wills or Testaments of Persons in your Parish yet unproved, or any Goods Administred without a legal grant from the Ordinary? Do you know of any Legacies given to your Church, or the Poor, or other pious and charitable uses, not yet received by you, or detained from you?

XIII. DO you know or have you heard of any in your Parish, who having the presentation of an Ecclesiastical Living, hath made any Simoniackal compact or gain thereby, either in Money, or by reserve of any part of the Tithes or Glebes belonging to that Benefice?

XIV. HAVE any Pews or Seats been erected in your Church or Chappel without leave from the Ordinary? Is there any strife or contention about Seats in the Church? Have any occasioned Riot, Clamor, or Fighting in the Church at any time?





## T I T. V.

*Concerning Parish-Clarks and Sextons belonging to the Church.*

- I. **H**A V E you a Parish-Clark, who is of a sober life and good report? Is he able for Reading, Writing, and Singing as a Clark? Is he chosen by your Minister, and approved by the Parish? Are his Wages duly paid him?
- II. **D**O T H he or your Sexton take care of the Church, to keep it lockt and clean, to open the doors, and to ring the Bells in due time, to call the Living to the Worship of God; also to admonish them by tolling of a Warning-Bell of any that are dying, thereby to meditate of their own Death, and to commend the others weak condition to the mercy of God?

## T I T. VI.

*Concerning Hospitals and Almes-Houses,  
Schools and School-masters, Physicians,  
Chirurgeons, and Midwives.*

- I. **W**H A T Hospital, Alms-house, or Free-school hath been Founded in your Parish? Are they so ordered in the Revenne and Use as the Founders appointed, and the Law of the Land allows?
- II. **W**H A T School-master private or publick is there in your Parish? Is he (or they) Licensed by the Bishop or his Chancellor? Dost he instruct his Scholars in the Catechisme and Religion of the Church of England, according to the Conformity and Order which is established as necessary for the Publick Peace?
- III. **D**O any in your Parish practise Physick, Chirurgery or Midwifery, without Licence from the Ordinary?

## T I T. VII.



## TIT. VII.

*Concerning Church-Wardens and Side-men.*

I. **A**RE the Church-Wardens of your Parish yearly chosen according to Law, and do they appoint Side-men to assist them for the due ordering of the Church?

II. **HAVE** the last Church-Wardens given up their accounts to those that succeed them, together with all monies and other things belonging to your Church or Chappell?

III. **DO** your Church-Wardens and Side-men diligently take notice of their Names, who without a sufficient cause are absent from Divine Service & Sermons on the Lords dayes and other Holy dayes? Do they by Warrant from the next Justices levy 12. pence by way of distress (according to Law) upon their Goods, in case they refuse to pay it, for their wilfull and causeless Absence? and is the Money so levied distributed to the poor of your Parish, and kept upon account in a Book?

IV. **DO** you suffer none to stand idle, or to play, or walk, or talk together, or to behave themselves rudely and unseemly within or without the Church during the time of Gods Holy Worship and Service, to the scandal and disturbance of the Minister and Congregation?

V. **DO** you provide fine White-bread and good Wine against every Communion, according to the number of Communicants?

VI. **DO** you cause all Strangers who preach in your Church to enter their Names in a Book, and by what Bishop they are Licensed to Preach?

VII. **HAVE** you taken care to give a true Answer unto these **ARTICLES**, and to draw up your Presentments according to your Oaths, consulting with your Minister and other Neighbours?

This

**T**His you are seriously to consider, That as the *faithfull* discharge of your *Offices* according to your Oaths and Duties is a special means to *repress, punish, and reform Sins, Scandals, and disorders* in your Parish; also to preserve the *honour* of *Religion* and the Peace of this Church, to the glory of our God and Saviour ( which are the great Uses and Ends of all Church-Government and Discipline : ) So if you neglect your Duties herein, you sin against God, your Consciences, and the Churches Prosperity, being lyable, in case of wilfull Omission and Perjury, to those Punishments which are by the Law to be inflicted on you for your default.

The Ministers of every Parish, are desired to give in the Names of such as having not yet received the Lords Supper, are by them upon examination judged fit for Confirmation, and so for the Holy Communion.

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**THE END.**